

Small-Space **Fitness**



With so much time spent trapped in the cubicles and chambers of spaceship life or today's ordinary life - it sometimes seems impossible to fit in fitness. You might think of long work hours, unsafe neighborhoods, rainy or hot weather... but just because outside forces keep you from venturing into the great beyond doesn't mean you can't get moving in the great indoors.

Consider these options for small-space fitness. Most of the activities, done for just 30 minutes most days of the week, can provide all the muscle-toning, heart-healthy benefits your body needs (and might even lead you to a more heavenly body).

Indoor exercise equipment

Go ahead - give the equipment in your employer's fitness facility a try. Or venture into your local health club. If you can afford home exercise equipment, have room for it, and believe you'll really use it regularly, check out the offerings at a good sporting goods store.

Always try before you buy. Go to the store dressed for exercise and give the equipment a full workout; or sample different types of equipment at a local gym or recreation center. Read magazine articles that rate the equipment on the market.

Choose the machine you'll use based on your exercise goals: do you want to build strength? Increase flexibility? Improve endurance? Enhance your cardiovascular health? All of the above? Ask a fitness trainer or knowledgeable salesperson which equipment will best meet your needs.

For heart-healthy benefits, choose equipment that emphasizes rhythmic action in the major muscle groups. Some recommended options include:

- *Exercise cycles* don't require much floor space, and are generally less expensive and more durable than other home exercise machines. Look for a sturdy seat and adjustable resistance.
- *Treadmills* give all the benefits of a brisk walk outdoors and are a top choice at the health clubs, But a decent-quality one for home use can be expensive and take up a lot of floor space. If you decide to buy, look for a treadmill with a good reputation and warranty.
- *Step machines* give a challenging workout, so they're suggested for people who already are well conditioned. Motorized models are generally sturdier but more expensive than non-motorized.
- *Rowing machines* give a good overall exercise for both upper and lower body, and are physically demanding. Beginning exercisers or people with low-back problems may want to choose another option.
- *Ski machines* also give a great total-body workout, but can require some physical coordination and a fair amount of floor space. Be sure you're comfortable using one before you buy it.





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Low-cost and free alternatives

Fancy-dancy equipment isn't necessary to gain strength, endurance, and flexibility. How about:

- Buying or renting an exercise video that features low-impact aerobics.
- Investing in resistance bands, also called fitness cables. Made of plastic tubing, these look similar to a jump rope and offer an effective, low-cost strength-training workout that you can take with you anywhere. Look for these at your local sporting goods or fitness equipment store; most come with exercise illustrations or instructional videos.
- Climbing real stairs - the space age alternative to stair climbing equipment. Take a break at work or home to scale the stairway. Or give up using the office elevator altogether. For an extended workout, climb the stairs, take the elevator down, and then climb again. Just make sure you warm up first and are in decent shape; this is demanding. And use the railing!
- Taking pleasure in the fitness benefits of in-home housework. Put some gusto into running the vacuum cleaner, scrubbing floors, sweeping, or mopping.
- Jogging in place or jumping rope. This has great aerobic benefits, and can even be done as you watch TV.
- Turning on some snazzy music and dancing around the living room. Get your children to join you.
- Buying a long phone cord, or a cordless phone, so you can pace while you carry on conversations.
- Getting up from your chair regularly to take brief work breaks, or to go visit with coworkers instead of phoning or e-mailing. The exercise benefit may be mild, but these breaks also will benefit your eyes, neck, and back, while increasing your attention span.
- Stretching by your desk (see Small-Space Exercise Manuals for stretching resources). You can even do pushups at your desk, if you don't mind what others think. A little bit here, a little bit there; it all adds up.

Small-Space Exercise Manuals

These books can offer additional support for getting fit in the great indoors:

Gotta Minute? - The Ultimate Guide of 1 Minute Workouts for Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime!, Bonnie Nygard, MEd, and Bonnie Hopper, MEd; Robert D. Reed (publisher), 2000, \$9.95, ISBN: 1885003374. Quickie exercises you can do while talking on the phone, driving a car, watching TV, doing laundry, etc.

Stretching at Your Computer or Desk, Bob and Jean Anderson, Lloyd Kahn (editor), Shelter Publications, 2000, \$9.95, ISBN: 0936070196. These exercises, designed for workplace settings, can all be done without making yourself overly conspicuous. Good for aches and pains from too much sifting or repetitive strain.

Complete Home Fitness Handbook, Ed Burke, Human Kinetics, 1996, \$15.95, ISBN: 0873229940. A guide to in-home workouts, with stretches, exercise techniques, and individual workouts for home fitness equipment. Includes tips for people on different fitness levels and budgets

Fitting in Fitness: Hundreds of Simple Ways to Put More Physical Activity Into Your Life, edited by the American Heart Association, Times Books, 1997, \$4.99, ISBN: 081292911X. Hundreds of tips for getting fit without an expensive gym membership or rigorous workout schedule.

